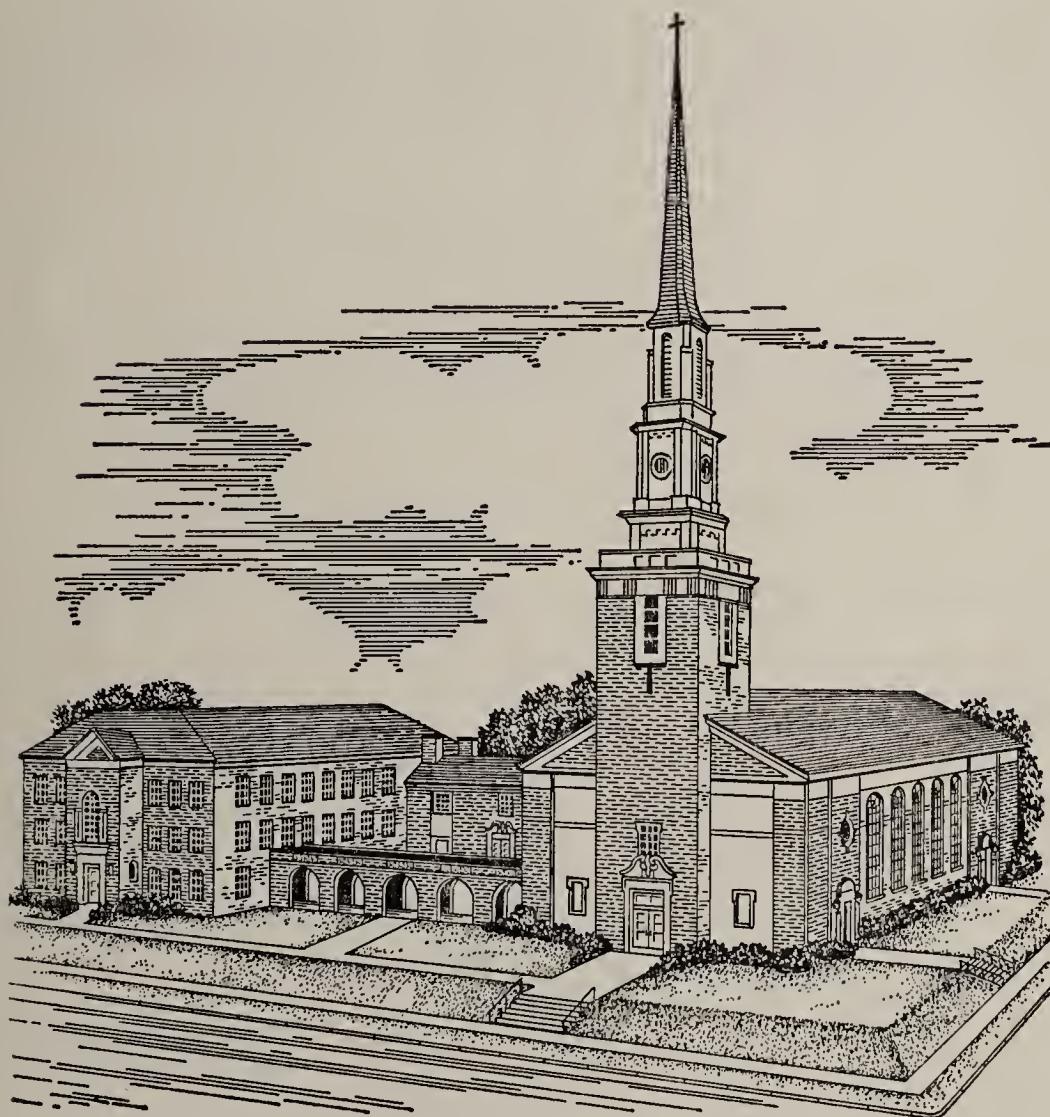


Historical Sketch

Front Street Methodist Church

Burlington, North Carolina

1888 – 1963



By

E. S. W. DAMERON, SR.

E. S. W. DAMERON, JR.

OCTOBER 13, 1963

SECTION I, 1888 - 1937

By E. S. W. DAMERON, SR.

It is generally known among the members of this church that prior to the erection of the first church building, located immediately to the east of this site in the year 1888, Methodists of the community worshipped at the old Union Church Building, located near the present site of the Fisher Street school building. The Methodists were permitted to occupy the Union Church building for worship one Sunday in each month, the pastor being free to preach at other churches in the Burlington Circuit on other Sundays. Rev. L. L. Johnson was the pastor when the movement for the construction of the first Front Street Building was launched.

Under date of May 28th, 1888, Rev. Mr. Johnson wrote the editor of the local paper as follows: "The corner stone of the new Methodist Church was placed this morning by Dr. W. S. Black, our presiding elder, using the ceremony prescribed in our Discipline. We very much appreciate the presence of our genial and highly esteemed friend and brother, Rev. M. Miller, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at this place. He read for us the hymn beginning:

"Behold the sure foundation stone,
Which God in Zion lays, etc."

We were also much pleased to have the presence of quite a number of the town people of different denominations. Also the pastor, Presiding Elder and members of the Methodist Church, return our many thanks to Mr. Dawson for the beautiful corner stone he gave us, on which is engraved the following:

"Front Street M. E. Church South, 1888."

The following articles were deposited: Bible, our church hymn-book, our church discipline, a list of the pastor, Presiding Elder and official church members, Nashville Advocate, Raleigh Advocate, Burlington News, and an appeal from the Presiding Elder to the church. The copy of the Christian Advocate deposited contained (an account of) the death, burial and funeral service of Dr. N. H. D. Wilson, and the obituary of Peter P. Holt, an aged and honored member of the church who died recently and was looking forward to the erection of this house of worship."

The communication is signed — "Yours truly, L. L. Johnson, Pastor, May 28, 1888."

The first church building was formally dedicated on September 6th, 1891, by Dr. W. S. Black, Presiding Elder. Writing for the "Orphan's Friend" regarding the occasion, Dr. Black said: "Last Sabbath was a glad day for the Methodists and all lovers of Christ in Burlington. After a real struggle the Methodists of that place finished, furnished and paid for a handsome brick church, which is an honor to the congregation and the town. Last Sabbath was set for its dedication, and this writer was invited to preach the sermon and dedicate the church. The house was packed, a number having come twelve or fifteen miles to attend the service. Beautiful chairs for the pulpit were presented by Mrs. Anthony; an elegant communion service through Mrs. Vaughn and Mrs. Ormond, a large picture of the North Carolina Conference by the Sunday School class taught by Mrs. Anthony, and a handsome hymn book for the pulpit by Rev. L. L. Johnson, who was their pastor when the enterprise was first projected.

The Sunday School is large and prosperous under Prof. Ormond.

Great improvements have been made in the place during the last two years, and handsome residences and business houses are still going up. Marked advances have also been made in the churches. The Presbyterians have just finished a beautiful brick church.

In the last eighteen months, Brother Earnhardt has added eighty-four members to the Methodist Church, and Burlington will soon be one of our best stations. We will be glad to visit Burlington again."

It appears that Rev. D. L. Earnhardt was sent to this circuit in 1888, and remained two years, and was followed by Rev. J. E. Underwood, who was on the charge for two years. In 1892, the second year of his pastorate, the Front Street Church was taken out of the circuit and made a station with an all-time pastor.

In the organization of Front Street Church and in the erection of the first church building, as well as the present building, George W. Anthony, affectionately known as "Uncle George," was a leading spirit. In fact, it may be truthfully said that he and his good wife really built the first structure, with such financial assistance as his fellow-members contributed.

In October of the year 1888, the Sunday School was organized, with E. T. Hunt as the first superintendent, Mrs. Mary Anthony, assistant superintendent, and Joseph A. Isley as secretary and treasurer. Among the first teachers were Mesdames Mary Anthony, W. N. Shoffner, M. E. Pyle, L. C. Vaughn, Annie Caffey, Georgia Hay, B. N. Murray, Birdie L. Holt, C. W. Hunt, and Messrs. W. E. Hay and E. W. Hunt. It is the opinion of Brother Jos. A. Isley that at first there were not more than fifty in the Sunday School. In 1889 the Sunday School attendance for the year was 3,537, or an average of more than seventy per Sunday; and Sunday School collections for the year amounted to \$139.36. Under the ambitious heading "Record of Important Events," we find mention of a Sunday School treat on December 28th, followed by the words "nice time" as appended comment by Secretary Isley.

In April of 1889, C. W. Hunt succeeded E. T. Hunt as Sunday School superintendent, and in December of the same year he in turn was succeeded by Jos. A. Isley, who held office until December, 1891. Then W. E. Ormond was chosen to lead the Sunday School until October of the year 1893.

In the fall of 1892, Rev. L. E. Thompson was sent to this charge and remained four years. Such meager records as are available indicate that the church was growing rapidly in membership and influence. The Sunday School classes were becoming larger and more numerous. Y. T. Ormond succeeded W. E. Ormond as Sunday School Superintendent in October, 1895, and four months later he was succeeded by C. A. Bray. It would appear that the Methodist system of rotation was operating overtime, as far as Sunday School superintendents were concerned. In September, 1896, T. C. Hoyle was chosen as superintendent and held the office until June of 1897. The total Sunday School attendance for 1896 was 6648, an average of about 130 per Sunday.

Next came the four years' pastorate of Rev. J. H. Shore covering the year 1898 to 1901, during which time Rev. E. A. Yates, first, and then Rev. W. H. Moore served the District as Presiding Elder.

Mr. John M. Cook was elected to the office of Superintendent of the Sunday School on June, 1897, and served as such until July, 1900, during which time the attendance was run up to around 145 per Sunday.

The official roll of the church at the beginning of the century listed the following names: Trustee and Steward: George W. Anthony, T. E. Allen, J. G. Dailey, A. F. Apple, Jos. A. Isley; Trustee: J. R. Ireland, J. W. Teague. Other stewards: B. O. Guthrie, Frank Hay, C. D. Story. Sunday School Superintendent: A. A. Apple. Local Elder, Rev. Thomas W. Mansfield; Superannuate, Rev. M. J. Hunt; President Epworth League, T. C. Hoyle. Mr. Apple then served as Sunday School Superintendent from July, 1900, until succeeded by O. F. Crowson, who in turn was succeeded by L. T. Barber in January, 1904.

In 1901 the church membership reached 278, a net gain of ten over the number at the first of the year; \$750 was paid to the pastor, and the year's collections amounted to \$1884.65. The Epworth League had 45 members, the Sunday School 20 teachers and 222 scholars who collected \$187.27. Jos. A. Isley was acting as Recording Steward and J. G. Dailey was chosen as District Steward.

Rev. G. B. Perry served as pastor in 1902. On July the 8th of that year, the church and the community suffered a great loss in the passing of Mrs. Mary Holt Anthony, who was married to George W. Anthony on Christmas Day, 1872. Under date of July 18th, 1902, the Burlington News carried beneath the picture of Mrs. Anthony this item: "On last Sunday morning Rev. G. B. Perry announced a gift of one thousand dollars to Front Street M. E. Church, by Mr. George W. Anthony, in memory of his wife, Mary Holt Anthony, to be used in the erection of a new church."

Rev. D. N. Caviness began his four years pastorate in the fall of 1902, with practically the same official church family, Rev. J. T. Gibbs, Presiding Elder, O. F. Crowson, Sunday School Superintendent, Jos. A. Isley, Recording Steward, salary of pastor, \$800; members, 277; 40% of conference collections and missionary assessments paid before the second Quarterly Conference in April.

In 1904 we have another gap of many years in available church records; but we know that Rev. Mr. Caviness was succeeded in 1904 by Rev. E. M. Snipes, and Rev. J. B. Hurley began his services as district Presiding Elder. Our next record begins with 1907, showing virtually the same church officials; a church membership of 371, representing a gain of about 100 since 1904; 225 in the Sunday School; 45 in the missionary society; usual branches of Church activity reported in a prosperous condition. In July of 1904, W. B. Atwater was elected as Sunday School Superintendent and held the office until January, 1905, when J. M. Atwater was chosen and served until December, 1909. At the end of the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Snipes at the beginning of 1910, the church membership had grown to 446; Sunday School membership to 316. That great pillar of the church, J. G. Dailey, had gone to his reward, and A. L. Davis was elected in his place on the Board of Trustees, and E. S. W. Dameron in his place on the Board of Stewards.

Then for two years Rev. J. A. Hornaday was sent to this station as pastor, and Dr. R. C. Beaman succeeded Rev. Mr. Hurley as Presiding Elder of the District. After examining the church roll, Rev. Mr. Hornaday reported to the Second Quarterly conference that a mistake of 52 names had been made, and that 394 was the true number of church members, and W. F. Dailey was added to the Board of Stewards. In December, 1909, W. E. Sharpe was elected superintendent of the Sunday School and his term of office was extended from year to year until 1917.

The 1911 Conference sent Rev. T. A. Sykes to this charge, and he also served two years. Here again there is no available quarterly conference record until 1914, most un-

fortunately for the reason, among others, that it was in this period that the main part of the present church building was erected. Joe A. Isley, George W. Anthony, and W. E. Sharpe composed the building committee, and when, after the building was completed, Dr. J. C. Kilgo was invited to preach, he expressed astonishment that such a building could be erected at such small cost.

By 1912 the annual Sunday School attendance reached more than an average of 350 per Sunday with total collections of \$669.22.

Next came the four years' pastorate of Rev. D. H. Tuttle, beginning with the year 1913; and during the first two years Rev. H. M. North was Presiding Elder, succeeded in 1915 by Rev. J. C. Wooten.

Records of the first 1915 Quarterly Conference, held on Feb. 8th, show a total church membership of 494; an enrollment of 607 in the Sunday School, and by the end of the year 1915, the Sunday School had an enrollment of 761. Rev. Mr. Tuttle reported to the First Quarterly Conference in 1915 a total church membership of 570 — a net gain for the past year of 76. The church in conference assembled had requested his return to this charge. The Sunday School rally in October, 1916, attracted an attendance of 1106. By January, 1917, the Sunday School enrollment had risen to 779—the largest in its history, and the pastor's report to the Conference noted the death of Mrs. Louise C. Vaughn, one of the charter members of the church, and a few months later the death of Miss Daisy Thompson and Mrs. S. F. Dailey, widow of J. G. Dailey.

This brings us to the two years' pastorate of Rev. S. E. Mercer, beginning in the fall of 1917.

It will be recalled that at this time the dreaded epidemic of influenza was spreading terror and death throughout the land, and its ravages were aggravated by the rigors of the winter of 1918. Public gatherings of every kind were discouraged. In his report to the first church conference, Rev. Mr. Mercer took note of these conditions, and pathetically adds: "I have heard there is a league here, but I have an idea it is in a state of suspended activity. The Sunday School appears to be alive."

To the Second Quarterly Conference he reported that he had visited all members, except two or three families who stay away from home in the daytime. In the fall of 1918, Rev. B. F. McLendon ("Cyclone Mack") conducted a revival, and many of us will remember his walking up and down the aisles of the tent dramatically reminding his hearers that influenza was still raging and that the coffins in which many would be buried were already in town. There were 50 additions to the church from this revival. Rev. Mr. Mercer reported to the Fourth Quarterly Conference in 1918 the death of another charter member, Mr. J. W. Teague; and J. A. Lowe was named as Superintendent of the Sunday School.

Dr. W. B. North came to us as pastor and Rev. M. T. Plyler as District Presiding Elder from the annual conference in 1919, finding a church membership of 648, and 677 in the Sunday School, with total Sunday School collections during the past year of \$938.00.

To the first church conference in 1921, Dr. North noted with extreme regret the passing of Almon L. Davis in the previous November; and throughout his four years' pastorate we have glowing reports on the principal phases of church activity to every Quarterly Conference.

In 1922 Mrs. A. J. Whittemore and Miss Mary Freeman were elected to the Board of Stewards, the first ladies to be elected to that office in our church, I believe.

The revival meetings conducted by Rev. Raymond Browning in 1922 added many members to the church and considerable impetus to its spiritual life.

At the close of his pastorate in November, 1923, Dr. North reported 617 enrolled in the Sunday School, and three Epworth Leagues with a membership of more than one hundred; two missionary societies with a total membership of 113, and collections amounting to \$1699.00 .

The four years' pastorate of Dr. J. B. Hurley came next, Dr. M. Bradshaw as Presiding Elder. Fifty new members were received into the church in the spring of 1924; and attendance at Sunday School averaged about 450 each Sunday. A Sunday School was organized at West Burlington in the fall of 1924 and J. A. Lowe was elected as the first Superintendent, leaving the presidency of the Front Street Men's Class to assume his new duties. W. E. Sharpe was reelected as Superintendent of the Front Street School. A building was purchased for the West Burlington organization; and extensive improvements and repairs to the Front Street building were completed, costing about \$25,000.00. After the Ham-Ramsey revival meetings in the spring of 1925, some 150 united with our church. C. G. Somers was elected Sunday School Superintendent in 1926 and the work went on very successfully in all departments. In the spring of 1927 we had a series of protracted meetings conducted by Dr. McLarty of Statesville; and in the fall of that year, Rev. G. W. Perry came to the charge; Rev. J. C. Wooten, Presiding Elder.

The church membership was then reported at 769; Sunday School enrollment 610; raised by Sunday School in 1927 \$1200.00. Throughout his pastorate, Rev. Mr. Perry submitted fine reports of programs in all phases of the church work, and the fourth Quarterly Conference passed a strong resolution requesting his return to this charge.

The official roll of the church at the beginning of 1930: Rev. L. D. Hayman, pastor. Steward and trustee: J. M. Atwater, T. L. Curlee, E. S. W. Dameron, J. A. Isley, M. B. Smith, J. S. Frost, B. O. Guthrie. Other stewards, A. A. Apple, Leo Carr, W. T. Cheatham, R. E. Cole, W. F. Dailey, H. B. Dixon, W. E. Hay, C. M. Huffman, L. E. Kirkman, C. V. Long, E. M. Long, C. R. Love, J. G. McAdams, R. A. Maynard, C. G. Somers, Geo. L. Thomas; District Steward, J. M. Atwater; Sunday School Superintendent, C. G. Somers, C. M. Huffman, Assistant; Recording Steward, C. R. Love; President Senior League, Miss Doris Apple; President Woman's Missionary Society, Mrs. H. P. McKay; Rev. W. F. Galloway and Rev. H. H. Jordan, Superannuates. The record further showed a church membership of 846; indebtedness on church buildings \$15,809.00; enrolled in Sunday School 694; subscriptions to General Organ 1; to Conference Organ 77; raised and paid out on budget for previous year \$15,097.37; pastor's salary \$3600.00. Rev. Mr. Hayman was on this charge for two years. He caused the church register to be thoroughly revised and the known addresses of members to be designated, with very beneficial results.

In 1931 Rev. W. A. Cade began his four year pastorate, with Rev. H. C. Smith as Presiding Elder, and not many changes were made in the official roll of the church. The church membership was registered at 853; value of church buildings and equipment \$100,000.00; \$3,385.00 raised by the 100 members of the Woman's Missionary societies; 675 enrolled in the Sunday School, still conducted by C. G. Somers. The work of the church in all phases went on with a gradual but steady progress in a fine spirit of co-operation and Christian fellowship.

In the spring of 1933 Rev. D. E. Earnhardt conducted for us a very successful revival, from the standpoint of spiritual enrichment rather than in the number of new members added to the church roll. All branches of the church work were then beginning to be more specialized and adapted to the needs of our members of both sexes and all ages. J. G. McAdams succeeded C. G. Somers as church school Superintendent in 1935, with Miss Ernestine Cherry as assistant in the Children's Division, E. C. Buckner, Young People's Division and Mrs. G. L. Steele, Adult Division; Golden Cross Director, Mrs. Carl Huffman, and the Cokesbury Record System was installed.

Rev. H. B. Porter became our Presiding Elder in the fall of 1934. At the end of the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Cade in 1935, we had 922 church members.

Then in the fall of 1935, Rev. H. K. King came to the charge and remained one year. J. G. McAdams was reelected Superintendent of the Church School, and in June, 1936, the School conducted a very successful Daily Vacation Bible School, and the church helped save Junaluska.

The 1936 annual conference gave us our present pastor, Rev. H. I. Glass, who continues to conduct the affairs of the church with commendable smoothness and efficiency. We regret that time forbids that we attempt to tract further the course of this modernized progress. The following is the official present roll of the church: Rev. H. I. Glass, Pastor; Rev. H. B. Porter, Presiding Elder. Trustees: Jos. A. Isley, Chairman; J. M. Atwater, E. S. W. Dameron, Dr. J. S. Frost, M. B. Smith. Stewards: M. B. Smith, Chairman; Leo Carr, W. E. Alley, J. M. Atwater, Dr. R. E. Brooks, R. E. Cole, B. M. Currin, W. F. Dailey, E. H. Eaton, Margaret Freeman, E. J. Heatwole, R. T. Hobby, J. A. Isley, J. W. Atwater, J. J. Isley, L. E. Kirkman, C. V. Long, E. M. Long, C. R. Love, R. A. Maynard, J. C. McAdams, C. G. Somers, R. H. Spence, J. H. Terrell, C. A. Thomas, J. F. Walton, Mrs. W. T. Williams, M. R. Zimmerman, L. C. Allen. Superintendent of Church School, L. C. Allen; M. R. Zimmerman, Secretary; Miss Alyse Smith, Organist; B. M. Currin, Recording Steward; Miss Harriet Atkinson, worker among young people; James Leath, now and for 31 years janitor.

In even the barest sketch or outline of our church history, there are many other things that should be included. For instance, it is worthy of note that our Boy Scout Troop was organized in 1917 by a lawyer, Ira Moser, now in Asheboro, N. C. In March, 1924, J. W. Robertson took charge and he has done and still is doing a great work for the boys. Over 225 boys have been members of the troop, from which two have entered the ministry. Who can measure the value of such work in behalf of the boys?

Much might well be said also as to the unselfish efforts of those who have served in our church choirs through these fifty years. I am sure our present vested choir organization furnishes music that has not been excelled by any choir in the history of our church.

There is much more that might well be said also as to the services rendered by many of our Sunday School officers and teachers throughout this half century; work such as the heroic efforts of Mrs. Jesse Cook, Mrs. W. T. Dailey, Miss Ella Robertson, Mrs. C. G. Somers, and others among the little ones in the basement.

The deeds of self-sacrificing devotion by members of the Woman's Missionary Societies through these years would furnish material for a volume, at least one chapter of which might well be devoted to feats of missionary accomplishments by our Miss Florine Robertson, for 14 years District Missionary Secretary, and another to the treasurer, Mrs.

E. S. W. Dameron, who for twenty-four years has handled the money, collected with infinite patience for the most part in very small installments; and still another chapter in that volume might well be devoted to tracing the efforts of Miss Mary Freeman and others who have gone out from our church to do home missionary work.

Then, surely, in any paper that pretended to be a history of the Church, special mention would have to be made of the services rendered by Joseph A. Isley, who, throughout these fifty years has been actively in harness, holding from one to three important offices all the time. And still he gives the command to "Press the Battle," and is himself always among the first to obey the command. Mrs. W. E. Hay, another charter member, is still with us, and still working, as she has always done, with fine devotion in the service of her Lord and His Church, as also are Mrs. J. W. Teague and "Uncle" George James. Such a history would also take account of the exceptionally fine work being done by M. B. Smith, Chairman of our Board of Stewards since 1930, the many secretariates of C. V. Long and the service of R. O. Browning in financial campaigns, and many other persons and things too numerous even to mention in this sketch.

It should not be forgotten that during these fifty years there have been hundreds in our church who never made or cared to make the official roll, but who have so lived and moved among us in humility and Christian service that we are sure that "when the roll is called up yonder," they will be there to join with the other glorified spirits of the just made perfect in the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away."

SECTION II, 1937 - 1955

By E. S. W. DAMERON, SR.

On October 9, 1938, our church celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Bishop Clare Purcell preached the anniversary sermon, which was followed by a sumptuous dinner served to an immense concourse of people from long tables erected on the church grounds. During the thirties there was remarkable growth in all departments and phases of the church work, and Youth Work in particular began to assume more prominence.

In 1940 plans were drawn for a new educational building, but due to war-time restrictions on certain building materials and other causes, the project was postponed until August, 1949 — just six weeks before the destruction of the main church building by fire on October 28, 1949. A new pipe organ was installed in 1942.

For seventeen months after the disastrous fire, our congregation met for Sunday School and regular Sunday morning church service in the Fisher Street School building. Our Methodist people will long remember with friendliest feelings the generous Christian courtesies of the members of the First Evangelical and Reformed Church in inviting our members not only to worship jointly with them on Sunday evenings, but also in having our pastor, Reverend Mr. Clegg, to alternate with theirs and preach every other Sunday evening.

In March, 1951, the New Educational Building was completed, and a joyous congregation moved back home, anticipating at the same time that before the passing of the year 1952 the Chapel and Main Auditorium would in all probability be also ready for occupancy.

On Easter Sunday, 1952, the first service in the Chapel was held; and the three-manual Moller organ was installed in the church a few weeks later.

The first service in the new church was held on May 28, 1952. It was an occasion of inexpressible sadness, being the funeral service of the late lamented M. B. Smith, a veritable pillar of Methodism. It seemed that just as the new house of worship, for which he had planned and worked so faithfully, was finished, he was called up higher to worship with the angels and "the spirits of the just made perfect" in the "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

The cost of the entire new church plant was \$616,000.00, exclusive of memorial gifts. While it is no part the purpose of this sketch to distribute praise among laymen or preachers, the writer takes the responsibility to say that Dr. W. L. Clegg and Dr. Walter C. Ball have been of inestimable assistance in the job of designing, building and raising the money to pay for our splendid church plant.

Our church members were proud to be in position to entertain the North Carolina Methodist Conference in October, 1952, and to learn that a new district was created bearing the name "Burlington District." Dr. Allen P. Brantley became the first District Superintendent. At this time we have a church membership of 1,500, and Sunday School enrollment of 1,120 and a Woman's Society of Christian Service with 325 members.

Appended hereto are the names of the members of the Building Committee who had charge of the construction of our new church plant.

Building Committee

R. A. Maynard, Chairman
R. D. Anthony
W. V. Coble
Mrs. F. D. Fowler
Mrs. W. C. Mosier

Phil Mast
Joe Neel
M. B. Smith
C. G. Somers
Royall Spence, Sr.

The Note and Deed of Trust on the new church was marked "Paid in Full" and the mortgage was burned on May 7, 1955. This represents an important milestone of Church History and an accomplishment of which we should be justly proud. Our church, on October 9, 1955, is not only a monument in the cause of Christianity, but a symbol of what can be accomplished by cooperation and stewardship by the members.

SECTION III, 1955 - 1963

By E. S. W. DAMERON, JR.

In 1955 a "No Silent Pulpit" crusade was begun, the purpose of which was to furnish lay speakers to small churches that could not support a minister of its own. Laymen were chosen by the quarterly conference and commissioned as lay speakers by Bishop Paul Garber. This was a major Conference movement, and was not confined to the local church. The following were commissioned from Front Street Church, and were sent forth: H. W. Beal, Carlyle Isley, James Rogers, Earl Burke, Sr., Bill Price, E. H. Foley, Dr. Edwin

Badgett, Judge Leo Carr, Lester Ridenhour, Edgar Dameron, Jr., Ralph Hodges, Phil H. Mast, Louis C. Allen, Jr., and Hugh Cummings. Front Street has continued to furnish lay speakers every year.

A new parsonage was constructed at 1218 Edgewood Avenue, which was first occupied in April of 1957. The old parsonage located adjacent to the church was removed, thereby clearing the south side of the church grounds of an old dwelling that housed our ministers for years, but which had lost its usefulness. In late 1959 and early 1960 the chapel was redecorated and a splendid two-manual Baldwin electric organ was installed in the chapel as a gift made by The Wesleyan Service Guild.

Our excellent Pastor, Dr. Edgar B. Fisher, wrote on March 21, 1961:

"The church has continued to grow in membership up until the present time, March, 1961, the membership being approximately 1,735 today. We now have on our church staff as full members: The Reverend William G. Sharpe, IV, Associate Minister; Miss Mable A. Nance, Director of Christian Education; Miss Lois Bradshaw, Secretary; and Charlie Poteat and Lawrence Warren, Sextons, in addition to the present pastor, the Reverend Edgar B. Fisher. In addition to the full time members of our church staff the church also pays a salary to our Minister of Music, Dr. M. N. Artley, and to our Church Organist, Mrs. Wilbur Cooper. We have an excellent week-day Kindergarten with a capacity enrollment, with Mrs. Gordon Marshall as the full-time teacher and director."

Reverend Mr. Sharpe will long be remembered for his interest in youth, and also for his direction of dramatics in the church.

In 1961 the rotation of ministers carried Dr. Fisher to Greenville, North Carolina, and brought to us our present minister, Reverend Mr. Leon Russell. It soon became apparent that Reverend Mr. Russell was quite well received by the congregation, being an excellent pastor, preacher and coordinator.

We were all saddened by the untimely death of Dr. W. L. Clegg, former pastor, on November 18, 1961. Dr. Clegg at the time was Superintendent of the Burlington District.

In early 1962 a committee of Social Concerns was formed, with Bennett Gordon as Chairman. The purpose of the committee was to consider and recommend action upon matters of social concern. The committee, under its present Chairman, L. C. Allen, Jr., now has under advisement the pressing social problems of alcoholism and racial prejudice.

The growth of the church in members and influence has continued in the last several years. One of the recent primary problems has been that of proximity parking. In order to alleviate the parking problem, the church, in the fall of 1962, upon approval of the Quarterly Conference, purchased two separate adjoining properties lying directly across Hoke Street. The old frame buildings were removed and the lots leveled and graveled for parking. There has been some discussion of further expansion of the church facilities to relieve crowded conditions in the Sunday School, but no definite action has been taken.

In the spring of 1962 the Sanctuary was redecorated and beautified and an electronic filter installed in the air conditioning plant. It is hoped that the church will continue to grow in membership and influence in the coming years, as it has done in the past. Under the able leadership of Reverend Mr. Leon Russell and Reverend Mr. Tracy A. Maness,

District Superintendent T. B. Hough and our officers and teachers, we have every reason to expect that we will continue to grow, as we celebrate this our 75th Anniversary on October 13, 1963.

At present we have 1,773 members of the church proper; and approximately 1,035 members of the church school; approximately 86 members of the Wesleyan Service Guild, and approximately 236 members of the Women's Society of Christian Service.

We are certainly honored to be chosen again for the site of the 1964 Annual Conference. This is in effect a testimonial to the growth and adequacy of the facilities of our church plant; may we also grow in understanding and faith, as we have grown in facilities and membership.

The members of our church have made substantial contributions to the "College Crusade" in the last several years to establish Colleges in eastern North Carolina.

MINISTERS

1888—L. L. Johnson
1888 - 1890—D. L. Earnhardt
1890 - 1892—J. E. Underwood
1892 - 1896—L. E. Thompson
1896 - 1901—J. H. Shore
1901 - 1902—G. B. Perry
1902 - 1905—D. N. Caviness
1905 - 1909—E. M. Snipes
1909 - 1911—J. A. Hornaday
1911 - 1913—T. A. Sykes
1913 - 1917—D. H. Tuttle
1917 - 1919—S. E. Mercer
1919 - 1923—W. B. North
1923 - 1927—J. B. Hurley
1927 - 1929—G. W. Perry
1929 - 1931—L. D. Hayman
1931 - 1935—W. A. Cade
1935 - 1936—H. K. King
1936 - 1939—H. I. Glass
1939 - 1942—F. S. Love
1942 - 1948—L. C. Larkin
1948 - 1953—W. L. Clegg
1953 - 1956—W. C. Ball
1956 - 1961—Edgar B. Fisher
1961 - —Leon Russell

